

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Issues Statement on Student Fee Increase

Calls 'Tax on Students' a Step Backward for California

Long Beach, CA – Lt. Governor John Garamendi had the following comments today after proposing to halt sharp fee increases for California State University (CSU) students, whose fees have already skyrocketed up to 94% over the past 5 years. Garamendi said he will introduce a similar proposal at today's University of California (UC) Board of Regents meeting, where student fees have increased up to 84% since 2002. Garamendi, in his role as Lt. Governor, serves as a governing member of both boards.

At today's meeting, the CSU Board of Trustees voted to oppose the Lt. Governor's resolution to stabilize student fees, instead voting to increase fees by 10%; this \$276 hike will bring CSU fees to \$3048 annually. The Board of UC Regents is scheduled to consider a 7.4% hike this afternoon; the UC proposal would raise fees by \$490, for a total of \$7,126 in mandatory systemwide fees. Students and families now face a total cost – including room, board, books, tuition and fees – of up to \$24,000 per year at UC and \$20,000 at CSU.

In the proposal put before the CSU Board of Trustees, and a similar proposal to be introduced for UC later today, Garamendi called for capping student fees at 2007-08 levels, and proposed limiting future fee increases to the rate of inflation. "Twenty years from now, the social and economic landscape of California will look very different than it is today. There is virtually no question that our population will be bigger, more diverse, the elderly will make up a greater proportion of the population, and we will be likely grappling with the effects of climate change. To meet these challenges, we will undoubtedly need more teachers, more scientists, more engineers, and more workers trained in health care and advanced technology fields.

"Hiking taxes on our young people takes us in the opposite direction. Rather than making college available to more young people, fee hikes take California a step backward. The question before us, then, is whether we will continue to offer the California dream - to all our people -- good jobs, good opportunities – or whether we will become increasingly stratified economically.

"Yes, our state is in a budget mess. But I believe that if our state can protect yacht owners and oil companies from tax hikes, we can certainly find a way to protect our young people from tax hikes. If we fail, who among us will tell a young person, who may be the first in their family to go to college, that they must be taxed more because yacht owners don't want to pay more? Who will tell a family -- struggling to put their child through college, while gas prices and food prices are out of sight -- that they should be taxed more because the oil companies won't pay more?

"In the midst of this budget crisis, it is incumbent on leaders to set priorities. I remain committed to fighting to put an end to taxing our students and once again invest in the promise of this great state."

A link to the Lt. Governor's student fee resolutions for UC and CSU can be found at:

<http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/may08/Finance.pdf>

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/regmeet/may08/f7.pdf>

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